

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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P R 241156Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7632

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MBABANE 0341

PRETORIA PASS ARMYATT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, APUB, US, WZ

SUBJECT: GOS REQUEST FOR MILITARY PUBLICATIONS
AND FILMS

REFS: A. MBABANE 0076; B. STATE 62603, 3/29/74

1. ON FEB. 18, EMBASSY RECEIVED NOTE FROM GOS DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REQUESTING BOOKS AND FILMS "RELATING TO ARMY TECHNIQUES" FOR THE KINGDOM'S DEFENSE FORCE LIBRARY. THIS REQUEST COMES FROM MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS S.M. MATSEBULA WHO IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN TRAINING OF SWAZILAND'S NEW ARMY. SINCE USG REFUSED EARLIER GOS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE (REF B), MATSEBULA HAS RAISED THIS QUESTION SEVERAL TIMES WITH CHARGE, MENTIONED IT TO ARMY ATTACHE COL. BOURNES DURING ATTACHES VISIT TO MBABANE JAN. 7 & 8, AND REFERRED TO IT DURING MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON JANUARY 14 (REF A). IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, MATSEBULA HAS EMPHASIZED THAT GOS IS SEEKING TO TRANSFORM THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF RECRUITING AND TRAINING TRIBAL "REGIMENTS" INTO A MORE MODERN SYSTEM. THE PURPOSE IS AS MUCH SOCIAL, IN THE SENSE OF GIVING THE YOUNG RECRUITS
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A SENSE OF COMRADESHIP AND PATRIOTISM, AS IT IS MILITARY.

IN THE DISCUSSION ON JAN. 14, THE AMBASSADOR REITERATED
USG POSITION ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SWAZILAND ADDING
THAT ANY NEW GOS REQUEST WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO WASHINGTON
FOR CONSIDERATION.

2. THE EMBASSY AND THE AMBASSADOR RECOMMEND THAT WE BE
RESPONSIVE TO THIS REQUEST. BOOKS, TRAINING MANUALS AND
FILMS ARE NOT LIKELY TO ENHANCE CAPABILITY OF SWAZI ARMY
BUT WOULD CONSTITUTE A FRIENDLY GESTURE THAT WOULD BE MUCH
APPRECIATED BY KING SOBHUZA AND OTHER TOP OFFICIALS. TWO
YEARS AFTER ITS CREATION, THE ARMY HAS BECOME A FACT OF
LIFE IN SWAZILAND THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED; WE SHOULD BE
DEVELOPING OUR CONTACTS IN THIS IMPORTANT INTEREST GROUP
WHICH SEEMS CERTAIN TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE, PARTICULARLY
IN POST-SOBHUZA SWAZILAND. THE PERIODIC PRESENTATION OF
TRAINING BOOKS AND FILMS IS ONE VEHICLE FOR DOING THIS.

3. IF THE DEPT. CONCURS, THE EMBASSY WILL ASK COL. BOURNES
IF HE CAN PROVIDE A FEW TRAINING MANUALS AND FILMS AS WELL
AS A LIST OF OTHER MATERIALS THAT ARE AVAILABLE, FOR THE
EMBASSY TO PASS TO MATSEBULA FOR THE GOS DEFENSE FORCE
LIBRARY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PUBLICATIONS PROCUREMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MBABAN00341
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750064-0869
From: MBABANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750219/aaaaaqz.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MBABANE 0076, 75 STATE 62603, 75 3/29/74
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 AUG 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <08 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOS REQUEST FOR MILITARY PUBLICATIONS AND FILMS
TAGS: MASS, APUB, US, WZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006